

CrossRoad Church UMC
 Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor
 September 11, 2011

I. Galatians Week 11b: Galatians 6:1-10 *Burden or Baggage II*

- A. Lauren Manning was a senior vice president and partner at Cantor Fitzgerald, the investment bank which had several floors of offices in the World Trade Center, losing 658 employees when the buildings were destroyed. She had just entered the North Tower Lobby when it was hit by the aircraft. A wave of burning jet fuel exploded from one of the elevator shafts, enveloping her and setting her aflame. She ran to the street where she was extinguished by a bystander and loaded onto one of the first ambulances on the scene. (Wiki)
- B. Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz *The Power of Full Engagement* #58 pg. 149 "When Lauren Manning was severely burned by a fireball following the attack on Two World Trade Center, she felt no immediate pain. Had she experienced the full brunt of her injuries, she almost certainly would have collapsed and died. Instead, she somehow managed to escape the building moments before it came down. But pain is also a signal that something is wrong. Within moments of Manning's escape, her injuries became almost unbearable, and she was rushed to the hospital with severe burns across 40 percent of her body. Attending to her pain the minute that she was out of imminent danger proved just as critical to saving her life as ignoring it earlier."
- C. Denial is defense mechanism that is built into every human being. Each of us uses it from time to time. There are times when our capacity to deny reality serves us well.
- D. *The Power of Full Engagement* Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz #58 pg. 149 "Denial is effectively a form of disengagement: It means shutting down a part of ourselves. When we fear the truth, we become more defensive, rigid and constricted."
- E. *Tragic Redemption* Hiram Johnson #68 pg. 34 "Denial is the process by which our unconscious resists change. In denial, we find no objective truth. Our objectivity slowly erodes through various forms of gradual deceptiveness. Denial is merely an inaccurate appraisal of reality. As John Drakeford puts it, 'Rationalization has been called the counterfeit of reason.'"

II. Community is a Reality Check.

- A. (Gal 6:1-10 NIV) *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. {2} Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*
- B. The word Paul uses for brothers is the great word *adelphos*. Its literal meaning is brother, but its contextual meaning is *fellow believers*.

C. (Gal 6:1 NRSV) *MY FRIENDS, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted.*

D. At any rate, Paul is addressing the community of believers at Galatia and encouraging and reminding them of the responsibility they have to each other, to bear each other's burdens.

E. Community is necessary in order to {2} *CARRY EACH OTHER'S BURDENS, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

F. In preparation for our fall small group campaign, this scripture is one of the cornerstones for community at CrossRoad.

G. Pursuing authentic relationships is done in small groups. Sunday morning at CrossRoad is dedicated to helping people connect with God through worship and God's Word.

H. Only so much can be done in Sunday service.

I. There are burdens that are shared and carried as a community in worship, but if you aren't in a small group, developing relationships, you aren't going to be able to *FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST.*

III. _____ is a form of denial

A. {3} *If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

B. *The Relationship Principles of Jesus* (Tom Holladay) - Loc. 2733-35 | "To exalt yourself means you need to be noticed by others. It's a need that is never fulfilled. If you go down that road, you'll find that the more notice you get, the more you need. You can make a different choice. You can choose to humble yourself and to notice others' needs. The only way to be cured of this need to be noticed is to start noticing other people's needs."

C. *Blue Like Jazz* Donald Miller #64 pg. 182 "I hear addicts talk about the shakes and panic attacks and the highs and lows of resisting their habit, and to some degree I understand them because I have had habits of my own, but no drug is so powerful as the drug of self. No rut in the mind is so deep as the one that says I am the world, the world belongs to me, all people are characters in my play. There is no addiction so powerful as self-addiction."

D. **Self-addiction is a terrible form of denial**

IV. **Self-evaluation is necessary to free us from Self-addiction.**

A. {4} *Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else,*

B. Most of us don't have the necessary tools or the time to adequately *TEST (OUR) HIS OWN ACTIONS.*

- C. In the quest for growing into the image of Jesus Christ, to experience the kind of freedom that Paul expresses in Galatians, having a solid understanding of your strengths and weaknesses is necessary.
- D. The fun part of this is that there is work to do on both sides.
- E. Paul has dealt with people who were too self-sufficient, a little too arrogant in their self-assessment and therefore lack the tools to actually carry someone else's burden.
- F. In contrast, I meet people who are so broken down, lacking self-confidence, having a low self-opinion: they become every bit as egocentric as the person with a high opinion of themselves.
- G. They couldn't add one more burden to their backpack even if they wanted too. In fact, people start avoiding them because they see them coming with all their gear spilling out of their pack, wobbling towards them; you do everything in your power just to not get hit by a piece of self-pity, or another complaint about how heavy their load is and no one ever helps them.
- H. This is why I am so excited about the Balanced series we will be starting in two weeks.
- I. It is a great way to evaluate how healthy we are in the area of finances, but knowing that when we have a healthy personal finance system, we can then grow into healthy human beings. The human being God intended.
- J. I can't say this enough: This is not a capital campaign. We don't want anything from you. We believe that God has something for you.
- K. You won't be revealing to anyone other than yourself the true state of your finances.
- L. The goal is to actually help each one of us understand that we actually have enough!!!!
- M. Even if you have enough, it may help you see how you can actually accomplish more with what you have.
- N. You will never know until you put it to the test.
- O. *The Power of Full Engagement* Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz #58 pg. 149 "But when avoiding painful truths becomes a way of life, we eventually suffer the consequences. Denial is akin to holding a finger in the dike. The pressure of suppressing feelings will eventually be too great, and the toll will show up somewhere—in anxiety, depression or numbness, diminished performance on the job, a marriage that blows up, even physical illness."

V. Security Check: Carry Your Own Baggage

- A. Traveling since 911 has made baggage security a new thing. You hear announcements that constantly remind you not to take anything from anyone or to let security know if you see abandoned baggage.
- B. {5} for each one should carry his own load.
- C. I read a great book on my summer break, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Peter Scazzero. In it he shared a story by Rabbi Edwim Friedman.
1. A man was on his path to fulfill his calling in life. As he was crossing a bridge a man approached from the other side. The man had a rope wrapped around his waist, that if stretched would reach about 30 feet in length.
 2. As he walked closer he began to unravel the rope and as they met in the middle he asked if he would hold the end of the rope. Without a thought, he reached out and took hold.
 3. He thanked him, instructed him to use two hands, then he jumped off the bridge.
 4. The man held tight, bracing himself as the other dangled at the end of the rope.
 5. "What are you trying to do?" he shouted.
 6. "Just hold tight!" said the stranger.
 7. He tried to pull the man up, but it was all he could do just to hold onto the rope.
 8. He asked, "Why did you do this?"
 9. He replied, "Remember, if you let go, I will be lost."
 10. "But I cannot pull you up," the man cried.
 11. "I am your responsibility," said the dangling man.
 12. "I did not ask for it," the man said.
 13. "If you let go, I am lost," the dangling man replied.
 14. The conversation goes back and forth. With no way to tie the rope to the bridge, and the man's lack of desire to help in any way by climbing up the rope, the man holding the rope finally said, "I will not accept the position of choice for your life, only for my own; I hereby give back the position of choice for your own life to you.
 15. "What do you mean?" the other asked, afraid.
 16. "I mean, simply, it's up to you. You decide which way this ends. I will become the counterweight. You do the pulling and bring yourself up. I will even tug some here."
 17. The dangling man shrieked, "You cannot mean what you say. You would not be so selfish. I am your responsibility. What could be so important that you would let someone die? Do not do this to me."

18. After a long pause, the man on the bridge at last uttered slowly, "I accept your choice." In voicing these words, he freed his hands and continued his journey over the bridge.

D. As a pastor, I have been called to hold onto the end of a lot of ropes.

1. Sometimes you do it just long enough for people to get their strength back, and they are able climb back out.
2. Sometimes, I have even been able to muster enough strength to pull them up, depends on the weight.
3. Often I have been surprised that they then just dive back off the bridge.
4. It is hard to have to look into the eyes of someone and say, this is not my weight to carry. I didn't throw you off the bridge, you jumped.

E. I got an email recently from someone. They joined one week and I think the next I preached a message on our Values.

1. There was one of our values that really upset them and they haven't been back to church since.
2. Two and half years went by, before they sent the note.
3. They let me know they are never coming back to CrossRoad, and will probably never go to another church.
4. I have learned that my words do carry power. I know that I can hurt people, and when I do most of the time it is innocent and without any malice.
5. I know I said things that have caused people to look for another church, but I never knew my words could keep someone from ever going to church again.
6. I have to let go of that rope.

F. I am not, and no one on staff or any member is, responsible when another jumps off the bridge.

G. We all dangle from time to time. Eventually, we have to take some action and pull a little.

H. (2 Cor 7:8-12 NIV) Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it--I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while-- {9} yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. {10} Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. {11} See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. {12} So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account

of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are.

VI. Healthy Growth occurs when we Sow to please the Spirit

A. {6} *Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. {7} Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. {8} The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

B. Don Bloch sent me this illustration he read from James Bender, in his book, *How to Talk Well* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1994), relates the story of a farmer who grew award-winning corn. Each year he entered his corn in the state fair where it won a blue ribbon.

One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it. The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbors.

"How can you afford to share your best seed corn with your neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year," the reporter asked.

"Why sir," said the farmer, "didn't you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn."

He is very much aware of the correctness of life. His corn cannot improve unless his neighbor's corn also improves.

So it is in other dimensions. Those who choose to be at peace must help their neighbors to be at peace. Those who choose to live well must help others to live well, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. And those who choose to be happy must help others to find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all.

C. Paul concludes: *{9} Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. {10} Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*